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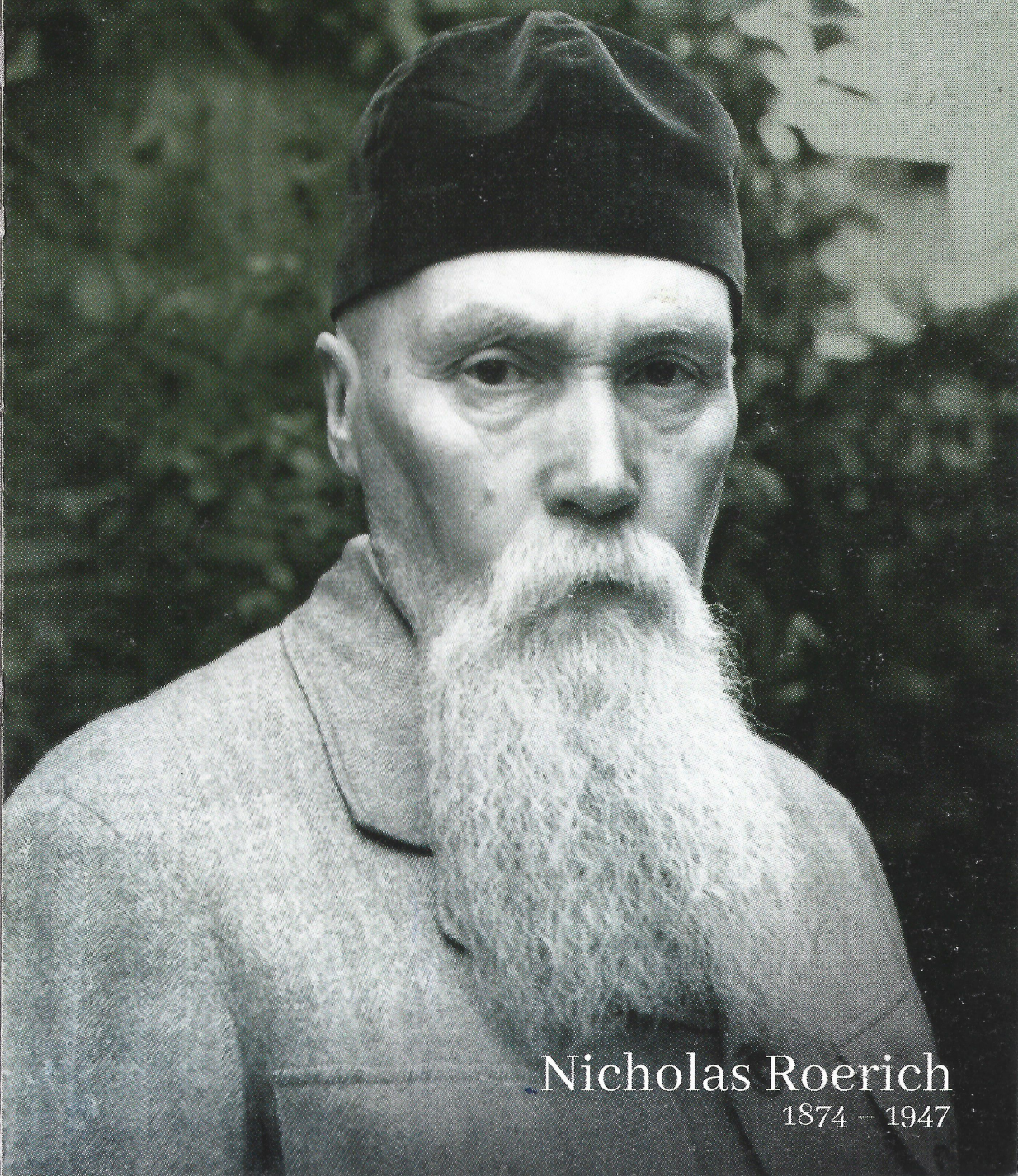
Vspominaya Roerich @150

An exhibition celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Prof. Nicholas Roerich, a visionary of 20th century art and culture. Vspominaya—a Russian word pronounced with a silent 'V'—means remembering or reminiscing, is a fitting tribute to his luminous journey through mystic landscapes and spiritual depths.

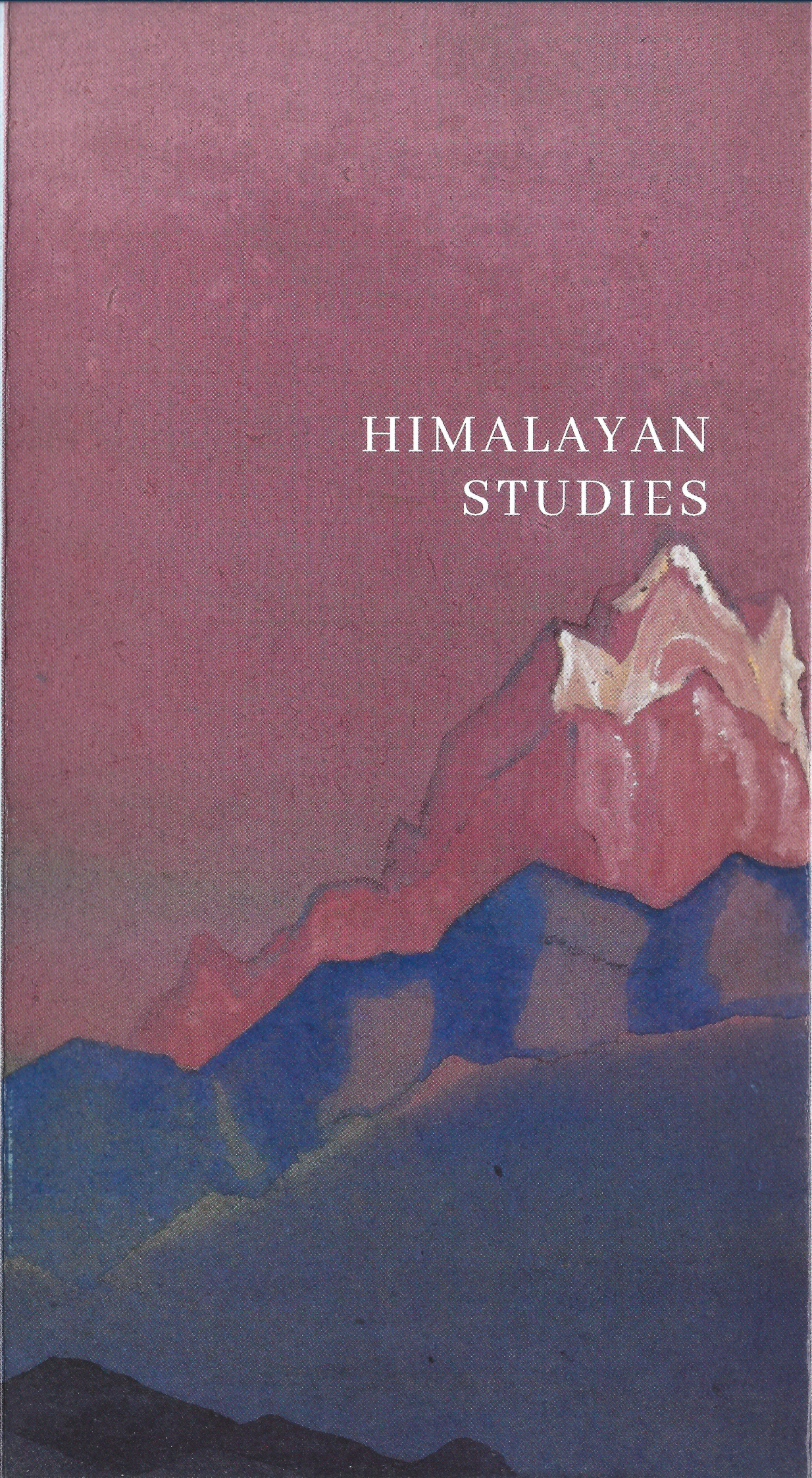


Nicholas Roerich
1874 – 1947

NICHOLAS ROERICH

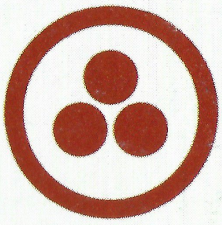
Nikolai Konstantinovich Rerikh, popularly known as Nicholas Roerich born on 8 October 1874 in St. Petersburg, was a pivotal figure of 20th century cultural and artistic discourse. His interests covered archaeology, philosophy, literature, and visual arts. Producing over 7,000 paintings and 29 books, Roerich's work reflects a profound engagement with spiritual and philosophical thoughts. His extensive travels across Central Asia and the Himalayas culminated in him settling in India, where his artistic output reached new heights. Deeply inspired by Eastern mysticism, Roerich's oeuvre is marked by a distinct symbolism and mastery of landscape, particularly his renowned use of luminous blues to evoke mystical, otherworldly spaces. The Government of India has identified him as a Navaratna, one of India's nine great artists whose work is protected as a national treasure. Nicholas Roerich's legacy endures as a bridge between Russian and Indian cultural traditions.

HIMALAYAN STUDIES



NICHOLAS ROERICH'S HIMALAYAN STUDIES SERIES, created during his scientific and cultural explorations of the Himalayas in the 1920s, offers a captivating visual sojourn through the majestic beauty of the mountain ranges. In these works, Nicholas Roerich has captured the spirit and grandeur of the natural form—the essence of the Himalayas, not the realistic details. Nicholas Roerich's spiritual journey through the Himalayas, both through his physical explorations and artistic expressions, reflects his eternal quest for Shambala. In many Eastern philosophical traditions, Shambala is envisioned as a mystical paradise—an idyllic realm of peace, beauty, and truth, hidden within the secret valleys of the Himalayan ranges. The lofty Kangchenjunga peaks, which appear frequently in Roerich's works are believed to be the gateway for Shambala.

The unity of subject matter, the stylistic approach, and a cohesive colour palette transport the viewer to the mountains. Thick layers of colour, bold brushstrokes, and strong lines that trace the contours of the peaks bring depth and a three-dimensional quality to the paintings. Roerich's technique alternates between thin coats of tempera for transparency and thick, opaque layers to highlight solid forms with vibrancy. The interplay of light and shade on the skies and peaks further enhances the sense of depth. Here, Nicholas Roerich employs a restrained yet effective colour palette, where some works are rendered in cooler hues of blue, white, and grey, while others are charged with warmer tones of yellow, pink, and purple. His deft manipulation of shades of blue breathes life into the tranquil magnificence of the mountains. Each piece portrays the changing moods of the mountains. The pale light of dawn, the pristine morning light, the incandescent glow of noon, the fading twilight, and the moonlit serenity of night, all contribute to the narrative of the series. Although originally intended as reference sketches for larger works, these small studies are complete compositions on their own right. The vast mountains are expressively portrayed on small canvases. The cardboards on which these spontaneous spot studies are done were part of the packing material used to transport supplies during his expeditions. Through depictions of snow-capped mountains, rivers winding through rugged landscapes, the occasional glimpse of Buddhist monasteries, and the serene grandeur of the Himalayan peaks, these compositions draw us into the very heart of the majestic ranges.



Roerich Pact

Prof. Nicholas Roerich, an artist and visionary, dedicated himself to world peace and unity through art. His philosophy promoted beauty as a means to achieve victory, unity, and prayer, a belief enshrined in the International Roerich Pact. Signed by 21 nations in 1935, with U.S. President Roosevelt's endorsement, the Pact aimed to protect cultural institutions and monuments during war. Roerich designed the Banner of Peace, a distinctive flag articulating the movement for peace. The design symbolized religion, art, science encompassed by the circle of culture, as the past, present and future achievement of humanity, encircled with the concept of eternity.

Roerich's mission was to awaken awareness among the public and policymakers about cultural preservation amidst the chaos of war. He foresaw the ravages of war on cultural heritage, intensified by the horrors of World War I. His Banner of Peace symbolized a shield for humanity's shared cultural spirit, garnering support from leaders like George Bernard Shaw, Albert Einstein, H.G. Wells, Rabindranath Tagore, and many other leaders of the world.

The Roerich Pact's significance endures, fostering international museum movements and inspiring conservation efforts. In an era of globalization and ongoing conflict, Roerich's vision for protecting the world's shared cultural legacy remains critical. His call for unity through the spirit of culture and peace resonates as an imperative for contemporary societies.

"Where there is Peace,
there is Culture.
Where there is Culture,
there is Peace."

-Nicholas Roerich

"In Beauty we are united,
through Beauty we pray,
with Beauty we conquer."

-Nicholas Roerich

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